

SERVICE AVIATION



STRENGTH FOR THE EAST: A Short Sunderland long-range flying boat of the type now being supplied to Singapore, with a background of Singapore III.

East Coast Exercise

AS briefly announced in *Flight* of June 16, air, sea, and land forces will be engaged in a combined exercise along 400 miles of our eastern seaboard during four days toward the end of this month.

The attacking force will comprise four battleships, an aircraft carrier, four cruisers, fifteen destroyers and five submarines; opposing this will be a skeleton naval force supported by land fortresses and 145 aircraft including Ansons, Stranraers, Vildebeest IV's, Hurricanes, Gladiators, and Gauntlets.

The "war zone" will extend from the Moray Firth to the Thames. Objectives of the main enemy attack will be the Thames-Medway estuary, Harwich and the Tyne and Forth. Although coastal defences will be manned by nucleus garrisons, including heavy artillery units, the major defensive rôle will be played by R.A.F. squadrons. No fewer than eight general reconnaissance squadrons will patrol the North Sea and endeavour, in co-operation with friendly "Red" warships to locate the approaching "Blue" force.

Combined exercises round the British Isles and Singapore have proved unquestionably that in narrow seas the R.A.F. can deny undetected approach to enemy warships. The larger area concerned in the forthcoming exercise introduces a severer test for the reconnaissance machines which must search in relays thousands of square miles of open water. Later in the exercise the interception of Fleet Air Arm machines from the "Blue" carrier will test the efficiency of the home fighter organisation.

Night-Flying Procedure

AN Air Ministry order remarks that accidents have been caused during night-flying by aircraft swinging while taking-off or landing and striking flare-path personnel. It therefore enjoins that the number of personnel on the landing area should be kept to a minimum, and such as are necessary are to be grouped during night-flying in the rear of the floodlight or number one flare. Except in emergency, aircraft are not to be given permission to take-off or land unless the landing area upwind of the floodlight or number one flare is clear of personnel.

The Visit to France

ELEVEN Hawker Hurricane eight-gun fighters of No. 111 (Fighter) Squadron, and four Gloster Gladiators of No. 87 (Fighter) Squadron, attended by a Vickers Valentia bomber transport and two Avro Ansons, left Northolt last Friday for Villacoublay, near Paris, where nine Hurricanes and three Gladiators gave demonstrations. Wing Cdr. S. L. G. Pope, D.F.C., was Officer-in-Charge and Air Comdre. R. E. Saul, D.F.C., accompanied the party.

Poor weather prevented a record-breaking trip by the Hurricanes, but they reached Paris in 66 minutes. Presumably they were forced to throttle back to allow the escorting Amiot bombers and Dewoitine fighters, which went out to meet them, to keep formation.

The Hurricanes' show was very well received. The programme was: Take-off by flights; squadron formation; line abreast; medium turn; break up; landing by flights. The Gladiators put up their usual impeccable display which took the following form: Rocket loop; half roll off top; stall turn; half upward roll and loop; slow roll; three loops; upward roll; half upward roll; loop and slow roll; half roll off loop.

The necessary ground staff and spare equipment went over in the Valentia and the Ansons. During the stay the officers were to have attended an official dinner in Paris.

New French machines taking part included the Potez 63 (see photograph on page 38) and the Amiot bomber, similar to the machine in which Rossi lately broke a series of world's records.

On Sunday Group Capt. Orlebar flew from Northolt to Villacoublay (235 miles) in 55 minutes in a Hurricane.

Leave for Medically Unfit

AS from June 22, 1938, the effective date of discharge of an airman invalidated from the service will be deferred for 28 days, and leave granted for this period.

Hurricanes for 56 (F.) Squadron

NO. 56 (Fighter) Squadron, stationed at North Weald, Essex, has been equipped with Hawker Hurricane eight-gun single-seater fighters. The Squadron will use its new equipment during the combined exercises to take place at the end of this month. It is commanded by Sqn. Ldr. C. L. Lea-Cox.

Permanent Commissions

THE undermentioned medical officers have been selected for permanent commissions, subject to physical fitness:—Flt. Lts. James Colman Bowe, M.B., B.Ch., D.P.H., John Howard Neal, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., Robert Henry Pratt, M.B., B.Ch., Leslie Norman Trethowan, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., John Brown Wallace, M.B., Ch.B., and Ralph Forbes Wynroe, M.B., Ch.B., D.M.R.E.

The Air Force List

THE July issue of the *Air Force List* has now been published. It can be purchased (price 4s.) from H.M. Stationery Office at the following addresses: Adastral House, Kingsway, London, W.C.2; 120, George Street, Edinburgh; 2, York Street, Manchester; 1, St. Andrew's Crescent, Cardiff; 15, Donegall Square, Belfast; or through any bookseller.

Orders for Sunderlands: A New Bomber

REPORTS state that a very large order has been placed for the Short Sunderland flying boat which has four Pegasus engines—presumably XXs. This machine, which has nose and stern turrets, is, of course, the military version of the Short Empire boats, and should have a top speed of over 200 m.p.h.

Another interesting report deals with the order of a large number of wings of the Sunderland type, to be used in the construction of new bombers. This adaptation should speed up production of the new machine considerably, and by removing the need for new jigs and tools a great economy will be effected.

New V.R. Centres

THE Air Ministry announces the opening of two further R.A.F. Volunteer Reserves training centres. The total of such centres is now 27. The new centres are at Luton and at Meir (Stoke-on-Trent). Applications for training as pilots are invited immediately from candidates resident in those districts. They should be addressed to the Air Officer Commanding No. 26 (Training) Group, The Hyde, Hendon, London, N.W.9.

Candidates must be between their 18th and 25th birthdays, be physically fit and have had an education approximately up to the standard of the School Certificate. Previous flying experience is not required. The initial period of service will be five years, with opportunity of extension. Selected candidates will be entered as airman pilots with the rank of sergeant. Later they will have opportunities of promotion to commissioned rank on merit. Training will be at week-ends and in the evenings with a continuous period of 15 days annually at, so far as possible, the convenience of individual pilots.

Pilots who carry out the required training and reach the required standard of proficiency will receive a retaining fee of £25 a year. Pay and allowances will be given during continuous training and an allowance for expenses at other training times.